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RUEHRY/AMEMBASSY CONAKRY IMMEDIATE 3683
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE IMMEDIATE 0928
INFO RUEBKC/ATO ASIA IMMEDIATE 2018

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 016243

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [CASC](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [OTRA](#) [HT](#)
SUBJECT: TRAVEL WARNING: HAITI

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¶1. The Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the situation in Haiti in the aftermath of a powerful earthquake, measuring 7.0 magnitude, that struck near Port-au-Prince on January 12. The Department of State has ordered the departure of all non-emergency U.S. government personnel from Haiti.

¶2. The Department of State strongly urges U.S. citizens to avoid travel to Haiti. The January 12 earthquake caused significant damage to key infrastructure, and access to basic services is extremely limited. Additional aftershocks remain a possibility. All forms of communication within Haiti are limited. The country is experiencing a shortage of food, water, transportation, and adequate shelter. Many medical facilities have been operating beyond maximum capacity, and the current sanitation situation poses serious health risks. The Embassy's ability to provide emergency consular services is limited. With the resumption of commercial air services on February 19, the U.S. Government has discontinued evacuation assistance.

¶3. Those wishing to assist in Haiti relief efforts should be aware that despite their good intentions, travel to Haiti will increase the burden on a system already struggling to support those in need on the ground. Those wishing to volunteer their services are advised that Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are reporting that their capacity to absorb additional volunteers is limited. Cash donations are the most effective way to help the relief effort in Haiti. Cash allows established organizations to purchase the exact type and quantity of items needed to help those affected by the earthquake without having to pay the high costs associated with transporting physical donations to Haiti. Financial contributions can be transferred quickly and reduce the challenges posed by limited staff, equipment, and space. Cash donations support Haiti's local economy and ensure that culturally and environmentally appropriate

assistance is rendered. The following website has information on how to assist in the Haiti earthquake relief effort: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/HaitiEarthquake>

¶4. U.S. citizens who intend to work for an organization involved in relief efforts in Haiti should be aware that living conditions are difficult, and the availability of food supplies, clean drinking water, and adequate shelter in Haiti is limited. U.S. citizens seeking work with a relief organization should ascertain before traveling to Haiti that the organization has the capability to provide food, water, and shelter for its paid and volunteer workers. All relief organizations should have in place a security plan for their personnel.

¶5. Strong aftershocks are likely for months after an earthquake. In the event of an aftershock, persons outside should avoid falling debris by moving to open spaces, away from walls, windows, buildings, and other structures that may collapse. If indoors, persons should take shelter beside furniture, not underneath. Experts believe that curling into a fetal position beside a table, desk or couch may create a "survivable void" inside collapsed buildings. Avoid damaged buildings and downed power lines. Do not use matches, lighters, candles, or any open flame in case of disrupted gas lines.

¶6. U.S. citizens who choose to travel to Haiti despite this Travel Warning are urged to register their travel

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through the State Department's travel registration website. The Embassy of the United States Port-au-Prince Haiti is located at Boulevard du 15 October, Tabarre 41, Tabarre, Haiti, telephone: (509) (2) 229-8000, facsimile: (509) (2) 229-8027, email: acspap@state.gov American Citizens Services Unit office hours are 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Consular Section is closed on U.S. and local holidays.

¶7. While the Embassy's ability to provide emergency consular services is limited, registration will enable receipt of warden messages via email. Current information on safety and security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States, or for callers outside the United States and Canada, a regular toll-line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, except U.S. federal holidays.

¶8. Minimize considered.
CLINTON